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Farm Broadcasters Letter

United States Department of Agriculture Office of Public Affairs Radio-TV Division Washington D.C. 20250 (202) 720-4330

Letter No. 2549

March 13, 1992

EXPORT FORECAST SHOULD HELP -- Higher exports, forecast by USDA at \$40 billion for fiscal year 1992, should help the economy, Secretary of Agriculture **Edward Madigan** says. "This increase is good news for U.S. agriculture and the U.S. economy," Madigan says. "USDA studies have shown that every dollar received from agricultural exports stimulates another \$1.59 in supporting activities to produce those exports and each \$1 billion gain in exports provides for another 27,000 jobs." Madigan says fiscal year 1992 will mark the 33rd consecutive year of an ag trade surplus. **Contact: Roger Runningen** (202) 720-4623.

WETLAND CONVERSION SLOWED -- The latest USDA tally of the nation's wetlands on non-federal rural lands shows the pace of ag wetland conversions is slowing significantly. From spring of 1987 to spring of 1991, 431,000 acres of wetlands were converted to other uses, according to a USDA study. Results of the study show annual conversions for ag purposes have declined significantly, says **James Moseley**, assistant secretary of agriculture for natural resources and environment. The annual conversion rate is down about 21,000 acres per year. **Contact: Kathy Gugulis** (202) 720-9149.

HUFF NOMINATED -- Secretary of Agriculture **Edward Madigan** says **James B. Huff, Sr.**, will be nominated as administrator of USDA's Rural Electrification Administration. Huff is Mississippi state director for USDA's Farmers Home Administration. He operates a 600-acre cattle and tree farm, and has been active in civic and community affairs. He received his bachelor of science degree in agriculture from Mississippi State University. **Contact: Roger Runningen** (202) 720-4623.

MARYLAND EXPANDS ELECTRONIC BENEFITS PROGRAM -- Maryland has expanded its food stamp program to allow an additional 9,000 residents to use plastic cards to buy their groceries. Maryland plans to take the electronic benefits transfer (EBT) project statewide by the end of 1992. "We're pleased it's working so well for them," says **Steve Abrams**, USDA's deputy assistant secretary for food and consumer services. "Our experience with EBT so far has been that food stamp users like it, retailers like it, bankers like it and the federal government likes it." EBT began as a pilot project in Baltimore in November 1989. USDA is also operating pilot food stamp EBT projects in Pennsylvania, New Mexico, Minnesota and Ohio. **Contact: Phil Shanholtzer** (703) 305-2313.



EAT RIGHT MONTH -- "Eat Right America" is the theme of National Nutrition Month, which is sponsored each March by the American Dietetic Association. The event helps raise Americans' consciousness about the relationship between their health and the food they eat. To eat healthfully, you should select a variety of foods every day, say registered dietitians **Diane Linder** and **Beth Reames**, who are nutrition specialists with the Extension Service of Louisiana State University. This may sound overly simple, they say, but variety is indeed the very spice of a healthy life. **Contact: Beth Reames** (504) 388-4141.

SPOTTED OWL PLAN -- USDA's Forest Service has submitted its plan for managing the habitat of the northern spotted owl on national forest lands in California, Oregon and Washington to the U.S. District Court in Seattle, Wash. The plan designated 5.9 million acres of national forest land and designated wilderness as Habitat Conservation Areas to be managed primarily as northern spotted owl habitat. The plan also provides an opportunity to make some timber sales within the next few months to help maintain and support jobs and communities. "This plan was considered the most appropriate after all factors were weighted," says **James Moseley**, assistant secretary of agriculture for natural resources and the environment. **Contact: Nancy Terry** (202) 205-1772.

ORGANIC STANDARDS -- The first meeting of the National Organic Standards Board will be held March 23-25 in Washington, D.C. The board, which was appointed by Secretary of Agriculture **Edward Madigan** Jan. 24, will advise Madigan on the best ways to implement the National Organic Certification Program mandated by the 1990 Farm Bill. The meeting is open to the public, but space is limited. **Contact: Rebecca Unkenholz** (202) 720-8998.

SCREWWORM OUTBREAK IN MEXICO -- USDA has dispersed sterilized screwworm flies in three southern Mexican states after Mexican officials found 19 cases of screwworms there. Mexico had gone more than a year without a screwworm case. Screwworms are parasites of all warm-blooded animals, particularly livestock, but can attack wildlife, pets and humans as well. Sterile screwworms are reared by the millions each week in a special facility in Tuxtla Gutierrez, Chiapas, Mexico. **Contact: Mary Yurkovich** (301) 436-7251.

PANEL FORMED ON BROADCAST ANTENNAE -- Secretary of Agriculture **Edward Madigan** and Secretary of the Interior **Manuel Lujan** say they will form an advisory committee to examine rental fees charged private radio and TV broadcasters for use of federal lands. The committee will advise on appropriate methods to determine fair market value for broadcasters putting antennae on federal lands the agencies manage. **Contact: Gordon Meyer** (202) 205-1061 (USDA) or **Tom Gorey** (202) 208-5717 (USDI).

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FROM OUR RADIO SERVICE

AGRICULTURE USA #1814 -- Five scientists take top honors from USDA for outstanding work. **Doug Wakefield** highlights the five winners on this edition of **Agriculture USA**. (Weekly reel -- 13-1/2 minute documentary.)

CONSUMER TIME #1296 -- A plan for the Northern spotted owl; we've lost our sheep; drought impacts on U.S. produce; smart food shopping; nutrition: how to eat better. (Weekly reel of 2-1/2 to 3 minute consumer features.)

AGRITAPE NEWS & FEATURES #1805 -- USDA News Highlights; drought potential in the U.S.; wool business shrinking; preventing farm injuries; corn and sorghum deficiency payments. (Weekly reel of news features.)

NEWS FEATURE FIVE #1511 -- New Marek's vaccine; versatile virus; OJ flavor and vitamin C; better tasting OJ; "juiced up" juice testing. (Weekly reel of research feature stories.)

UPCOMING ON USDA RADIO NEWSLINE -- Mon., March 23, ag trade update, catfish, poultry production; Tues., March 24, crop/weather update, vegetable production; Wed., March 25, aquaculture outlook; Fri., March 27, hog/pig numbers; Mon., March 30, ag prices; Tues., March 31, crop/weather update, world tobacco situation, world livestock situation, U.S. grain stocks, prospective plantings. **(These are the USDA reports we know about in advance. Our Newsline carries many stories every day which are not listed in this lineup. Please don't let the lack of a story listing keep you from calling.)**

DIAL THE USDA RADIO NEWSLINES (202) 488-8358 or 8359.

Material changed at 5 p.m., EST, each working day.

FROM OUR TELEVISION NEWS SERVICE

FEATURES -- **Lynn Wyvill** reports on agricultural promotion programs; **Pat O'Leary** reports on lawn landscaping; **Will Pemble** reports on a new cold-tolerant orange developed by USDA scientists; **John Snyder** on the future of the oil crop, Canola.

ACTUALITIES -- USDA meteorologist **Norton Strommen** on crops and weather; USDA outlook board chairman **James Donald** on the latest crop report results; USDA economist **Steve MacDonald** on farm trade; USDA foreign trade officer **Geoffrey Wiggins** on help for U.S. ag exporters.

UPCOMING FEATURES -- **Pat O'Leary** reports on USDA soil and earthworm research; **DeBoria Janifer** reports on nutrition labeling education; **Lynn Wyvill** on better food safety information.

EVERY OTHER WEEK -- **Agriculture Update**, five minutes of USDA farm program information in "news desk" format with B-roll.

*Available on Satellite Galaxy 6, Transponder 12D (Channel 23), audio 6.2 or 6.8: **Thursdays** from 7:30 - 7:45 p.m., EST, **Saturdays** from 10 - 10:45 a.m., EST, and **Mondays** from 8 - 8:45 a.m., EST.*

CATTLE PRODUCERS...are doing better than expected this winter, says **Bob Givens** (KGNC, Amarillo, Texas). Prices have not dipped to forecast levels, helping feedlot operators in his area to maintain a break-even position. Bob says the winter wheat crop has had an excellent start. Producers tell him it's the best they've seen in years.

FOURTH ANNUAL...Ag Knowledge Bowl for local FFA chapters has been completed, says **Don Wick** (KWOA, Worthington, Minn.). The bowl is sponsored by the station and has the support of FFA advisors and schools. Don taped the program and broadcast it later on his station. He says the bowl provides recognition for those students who are performing well academically in agricultural subjects.

CONGRATULATIONS...to **Ray Wilkinson** (WRAL/Tobacco Radio Network, Raleigh, N.C.). In recognition of his long service to farm broadcasting he has received honorary lifetime membership in the North Carolina Farm Writers and Broadcasters Association. **Jack Hankins** (WELS, Kinston, retired) was awarded the Meritorious Service Award from the group. Thanks to **Dan Wilkinson**, NCFWA president, for the information. The association is celebrating its 40th year.

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Radio-TV Division
U.S. Department of Agriculture
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INTERESTING FIGURES...are being generated from the purchase of inputs. **Eddie Gale** (WGIL/WAAG, Galesburg, Ill.) says sales of herbicides in his area are down about one-third. Producers tell him they plan to use less this year even though there will be increased acreages for soybeans and corn.

NEW FARM DIRECTOR...at WYRQ, Little Falls, Minn., is **Kim Spiczka**. She replaces **Natalie Schmitt** who has shifted her attention to her new baby and the family farm. Kim is upholding a family tradition of ag broadcasting. Her sister is **Lori Spiczka**, co-anchor with **Eric Parsons** on the USDA TV program "Agriculture Update."

MOVED...**Darrin Johnston** to AgriAmerica Network, Indianapolis, Ind., from WKFI, Wilmington, Ohio. Darrin says the network is producing PSAs that its stations will use during National Agriculture Week, March 15-21. **Travis Corzatt** has assumed farm broadcasting responsibilities at WKFI.

VIC POWELL
Chief, Radio & TV Division